

For immediate release
October 25, 2005

REGIONAL WATER PROJECTS, BORDER WATER MANAGEMENT, DIPLOMATIC ISSUES ON AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 2 PUBLIC MEETING

U.S.-Mexico border water issues will be discussed at an upcoming public meeting in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The meeting of the Rio Grande Citizens' Forum of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) will take place November 2, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m., at the Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, 200 East Picacho in Las Cruces.

Information will be presented about water projects by El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU), Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID), and the City of Las Cruces which were recently awarded grant funds by the United States Bureau of Reclamation. EPWU is using the funding to install river and drain instrumentation stations to monitor flow and water quality. The project will allow real-time and historic water data to be shared through a website sponsored by the Paso del Norte Watershed Council. EBID is implementing a flow metering and data collection project, with the goal of metering all relevant storage, flows in the Rio Grande, diversions from the river, and return flows. The City of Las Cruces received funds for a project at Burn Lake to use the lake as a regulating reservoir for capturing storm flows and to improve water quality for aquatic life and aesthetic value.

In other business, Sally Spener of the USIBWC will present the Good Neighbor Environmental Board Eighth Report, "Water Resources Management on the U.S.-Mexico Border." The USIBWC Commissioner serves on the board, which advises the President and Congress of the United States on border environment and infrastructure practices along the U.S. border with Mexico. The report makes a number of

recommendations regarding border water management including strengthening cross-border institutional collaboration, enhancing collection, analysis, and sharing of border water data, and implementing water resources planning using a stakeholder-driven watershed approach.

Mary Brandt, Special Assistant to the U.S. Commissioner who serves as the USIBWC's liaison at the U.S. Department of State, will discuss the diplomatic function of the International Boundary and Water Commission and the relationship between the U.S. Section and the Department of State. The USIBWC is an independent federal commission which receives foreign policy guidance from the Department of State.

The Rio Grande Citizens' Forum was established by the USIBWC in 1999 to facilitate the exchange of information regarding USIBWC activities on the Rio Grande between Percha Dam, New Mexico and Fort Quitman, Texas. It is designed to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, irrigation districts, municipalities, and others interested in the river. Members of the Rio Grande Citizens' Forum Board, who serve as unpaid volunteers, represent a variety of interests along the Rio Grande in west Texas and southern New Mexico.

The meeting agenda appears below. Members of the public can obtain more information from Public Affairs Assistant Selma Rivera at 915-832-4706, selmarivera@ibwc.state.gov.

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RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM

Wednesday, November 2, 2005

6:00 - 8:30 P.M.

Thomas Branigan Memorial Library

200 East Picacho

Las Cruces, NM 88001

Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions - Michael P. Fahy, Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- Diplomatic Function of the International Boundary and Water Commission and the Relationship between the U.S. Section and the Department of State - Mary Brandt, Special Assistant to the U.S. Commissioner
- United States Bureau of Reclamation Water 2025 Challenge Grant - Michael P. Fahy, Planning and Development Manager, El Paso Water Utilities; Henry Magallanez, District Engineer, Elephant Butte Irrigation District; Eric Martin, Project Management Administrator, City of Las Cruces
- Good Neighbor Environmental Board Eighth Report, Water Resources Management on the U.S.-Mexico Border - Sally Spener, Acting Secretary, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion, Suggested Future Agenda Items
- Next Meeting for the Rio Grande Citizens' Forum will be February 15 in El Paso

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 915-832-4706 or e-mail selmarivera@ibwc.state.gov